

5-23-2008

Commencement 2008

Boston College Law School

Follow this and additional works at: http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/law_school_publications



Part of the [Legal Education Commons](#)

Digital Commons Citation

Boston College Law School, "Commencement 2008" (2008). *Law School Publications*. 563.
http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/law_school_publications/563

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Law School Archive at Digital Commons @ Boston College Law School. It has been accepted for inclusion in Law School Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Boston College Law School. For more information, please contact nick.szydlowski@bc.edu.



LAW SCHOOL HOME

[Students Home](#)[About BC Law](#)[Admission & Financial Aid](#)[Center for Experiential Learning](#)[The Rappaport Center](#)[Faculty & Administration](#)

News, Events & Calendars

[2016 News Archive](#)[2015-News Archive](#)[2014-News Archive](#)[2013-News Archive](#)[2012-News Archive](#)[2011-News Archive](#)[2010-News Archive](#)[2009-News Archive](#)

2008-News Archive

[2007-News Archive](#)[2006-News Archive](#)[2005-News Archive](#)[2004-News Archive](#)[2003-News Archive](#)[2002-News Archive](#)[2001-News Archive](#)[2000-News Archive](#)[Events](#)[Services & Departments](#)[Law Reviews](#)[Alumni and Friends](#)[Contact Us](#)[Law Library](#)[bc home](#) > [schools](#) > [law school home](#) > [news-events](#) > [2008-news archive](#) >

Commencement 2008

5/23/08--ADDRESSING THE CLASS OF 2008, U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL MUKASEY
URGED THE GRADUATES TO USE THEIR SKILLS TO FIND OUT WHAT THE LAW IS, RATHER THAN CONFUSING IT WITH WHAT SOMEONE ELSE MIGHT BELIEVE IT TO BE.

5/23/08--Addressing the Boston College Law School class of 2008, United States Attorney General Michael Mukasey urged the graduates to "do law," asking them to use their skills to find out what the law is, rather than confusing it with what someone else might believe it to be.

[Watch Commencement Video](#)[Watch Graduation Awards](#)

"A lawyer's principal duty is to advise his client as to what the best reading of the law is--to define the space in which the client may act consistent with the law," Mukasey said. "If you do your job well, there will be times when you will have to advise clients that the law prohibits them from doing things that they want to do, or that might even be, in your view, the right thing to do. And there will be times when you will have to advise clients that the law permits them to take actions that you may find imprudent, or even wrong."

Mukasey referenced the United States' "well-proved commitment to the rule of law," saying that this commitment set it apart from many other countries around the world. "If that commitment is to persist--if we are to remain, as we often say, a nation of laws, not of men--then we must insist that law matters, that the law is something other than a hollow vessel into which a client, or a policymaker, may pour his or her personal views or preferences whether you pursue the public interest in some other way or enter the legal academy, you, as lawyers, must do law. You must do law even--you must do law especially--when the stakes are high and the pressures to do something else are tremendous. Nowhere are the stakes higher and the pressures greater than when the subject is national security, where, as I said earlier, the questions are as complex and as consequential as they come."

In introducing the Attorney General, BC Law Dean John H. Garvey pointed out that Mr. Mukasey had "given the better part of his professional life to public service as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, as a federal judge, and as Attorney General."

"He has also worked in his spare time for a number of charitable organizations and activities," Garvey said. "For his many good works he has received numerous awards, including the Learned Hand Medal for Excellence in Federal Jurisprudence."

Two hundred and seventy-one J.D. graduates received degrees at the Law School's 76th Commencement exercises. Six LL.M. students, the first LL.M. class in the history of Boston College Law School, also received degrees.

Michael Mukasey was born in the Bronx, New York, in 1941 and graduated from Columbia College and Yale Law School, where he was on the Board of Editors of the Yale Law Journal. Prior to becoming Attorney General, he had a lengthy career as an attorney, including service as an Assistant United States Attorney from 1972 to 1976 in New York. From 1975 to 1976 he also served as chief of his district's Official Corruption Unit. From 1976 to 1987 he was an

associate, and then member, of the firm Patterson, Belknap, Webb & Tyler.

Mukasey was appointed to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 and served until 2006, the last six years as chief judge. During that time, Judge Mukasey presided over hundreds of cases, including the trial of Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman and 11 co-defendants charged with conspiring to blow up numerous sites in New York. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, he was widely praised for the speed with which the federal courthouse, located just blocks from the site of the World Trade Center, returned to normal operation.

Upon his retirement from the bench, Mukasey returned to Patterson, Belknap, Webb & Tyler, in the firm's litigation group.

Judge Mukasey has received numerous awards over the years, including the Learned Hand Medal for Excellence in Federal Jurisprudence from the Federal Bar Council, the William Tendy Award from the Fiske Association, awards from the Seymour Association, the Respect for Law Alliance, and the Ari Halberstam Award from the Jewish Children's Museum. He also received an honorary degree from the Brooklyn Law School.

Mukasey's professional and civic activities have included service as a director of the William Nelson Cromwell Foundation and as a director of the Jewish Children's Museum. He has also been a lecturer in law at the Columbia Law School. He was a member of the Automation and Technology Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States; was chairman of the Committee on Public Access to Information and Proceedings of the New York State Bar Association; was a member of the Federal Courts Committee and the Communications Law Committee of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York; and was a member of the American Bar Association.

Judge Mukasey was nominated to be Attorney General by President George W. Bush on September 17, 2007, and confirmed by the United States Senate on November 8. He entered duty on November 9.

He and his wife, Susan, have two grown children, Marc and Jessica, and two grandsons.

Boston College Law School opened in 1929 in a small downtown Boston office building with 54 students and two full-time faculty members. Currently ranked 26th in the country by the annual US News & World Report survey, the law schools highly qualified students are drawn from more than 230 colleges and universities across the United States, as well as in other countries. Over 6,600 applicants competed for 270 seats in the entering class this year. The law schools 11,000+ alumni practice in 50 states and many foreign countries, holding positions in major law firms, corporate in-house legal departments, the judiciary, government agencies, private industry, academic and public interest organizations, and serving as elected state legislators and members of the U.S. Congress.